

# **SMITHFIELD SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 2014 @ 7:00 P.M.**

**HIGH SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER**

## **MINUTES**

**Members present: Mr. Richard Iannitelli, Chair, Mrs. Kellie-Ann Heenan, Vice-Chair, Mrs. Virginia Harnois, Secretary, Mr. Brenden Oates and Mr. Sean Clough. Also present were: Mr. Robert O'Brien, Superintendent, Mrs. Bridget Morisseau, Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Craig Levis, Special Education Director, Mrs. Lisa Cournoyer, Business Manager, Mr. Ben Scungio Esq., School Committee/School Department Attorney. Mr. Matthew Strik, Student Representative to the School Committee. Mr. Iannitelli called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.**

**1. Mr. Iannitelli read the Emergency Evacuation and Health Notification Statement.**

**2. Mr. Oates moved to approve Consent Agenda Items:**

**2.1 Minutes:**

**A) Minutes of the December 16, 2013 School Committee Meeting**

**2.2 Bills:**

**A) Regular Bills**

**B) Prepaid Checks from December 20, 2013 through January 3, 2014**

**Mrs. Harnois seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a**

**5-0 vote.**

### **3. HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

**Student representative Matthew Strik reported:**

- Winterball is Saturday, January 11th at Rhodes on the Pawtuxet, tickets are \$50.00.**
- Midterm exams begin in two weeks.**
- Rehearsals for the Wizard of Oz play began January 6th.**
- Student college acceptance letters are beginning to come in.**

**4. Dr. Renee Palazzo was recognized for successfully defending her Doctorate dissertation.**

**Mr. O'Brien said Mrs. Palazzo was able to go through the process in spite of the many demands of her job and family. He said he is very proud of her accomplishments. Mr. O'Brien and the Committee congratulated Mrs. Palazzo. Mrs. Palazzo shared an overview of the research she did to earn her doctorate.**

**5. There was a presentation from Mr. James Grasso, the President of SilentSherpa. SilentSherpa is an Energy Consultant and Portfolio Management company that offers market guidance solutions providing complete energy budget management. Mr. Grasso gave an overview of the company. He said SilentSherpa's energy portfolio management services reduce expense and manage risk. The portfolio management services consist of a cycle of:**

- Advising the client: Energy advisors offer guidance through every aspect of energy management from market advice to portfolio**

**planning to contract procurement.**

- Procuring solutions: Online Procurement Services include planning, preparation and administration of web-based RFQ's. Reporting, analysis, and summarization of qualified bid offers. Contract review, negotiation and enrollment with utility/supplier. Electronic archival of RFQ, offers, attachments and communications. Ongoing contract position management and performance benchmarking.**
- Audit services: Collection and consolidation of monthly billing data. Imaging and online archival of monthly billing statements. Data entry of billed expenses online. Tracking of billed delivery services, supplier services, and tax charges. Benchmarking of actual billed costs vs. market rates and forecasted budget.**
- Assessing needs.**

**The entire service cycle is delivered and archived through a Portfolio Manager online application, via a portfolio management team, with each member specializing in the service they are rendering [i.e. electric, gas, oil, etc.]. Mr. Grasso said that there is no revenue affiliation with recommended service providers or market participants. Mr. Grasso added:**

- Services are provided under annual contract, with a one-year minimum contract; automatic renewal with 90 day “out” after first 12 months if dissatisfied.**
- Fees are directly assessed to the client; either fixed or hourly [no commissions] to ensure transparency and no conflicts of interest. Billing is done quarterly.**

**Mr. Iannitelli asked for a further explanation on the fees.**

**Mr. Grasso said that the fee is based on a percentage of the value of the portfolio. Typically, they bill 1%-2% with larger clients on the lower end of that. A smaller client, such as the Smithfield School Department, would fall closer to the 2% fee. Mr. Grasso said for electricity, after a quick analysis of the value of the bills given to him by Mrs. Cournoyer which in a normalized energy environment are just under \$300,000, Mr. Grasso estimated that the advisory services would be approximately \$6,000 for electricity per year. Mr. Grasso estimates a fee of \$5,000 for natural gas per year for the advisory services.**

**6. Mr. Oates moved that the 2012-2013 school department audit be reviewed and approved. Mrs. Heenan seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote.**

**Mr. Robert Civetti, from Braver PC was present and reviewed the school department's annual financial statements with the Committee and answered questions.**

**Mrs. Harnois made note to the fact that she did not see a management letter in the audit. Mr. Civetti stated that there was not a management letter for this audit. A management letter is an analysis of the findings that serves to identify areas of operations or procedures that need improvement. Mrs. Harnois said that due to the hard work of Mrs. Cournoyer there was not a management letter. Mrs. Cournoyer was commended on the fact that the audit did not include**

**a management letter.**

**7. The Committee discussed the budget recommendations of the performance audit. Mr. Iannitelli stated that at this time a vote was not needed on these items and that at some point all of the recommendations in the performance audit will be addressed in a methodical manner.**

**Mrs. Heenan suggested that in regards to the wish lists that are put together for the budget, if the discretionary increases versus the mandatory items in the budget could be highlighted in some manner in the budget.**

**8. Mr. Oates moved that the following people be appointed to the school committee ad-hoc policy committee.**

**Virginia Harnois Craig Levis Catherine Pleau  
Kellie-Ann Heenan Paul Barrette Michael Twohey  
Robert O'Brien Daniel Kelley Paul Dumouchel**

**Mr. Clough seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote.**

**This is a follow up to one of the recommendations in the Performance Audit under School Committee Policies. Mr. Iannitelli stated that there will be more members added to this committee.**

**These meetings will be posted to comply with the Open Meetings Act.**

**Public comment: Michael Twohey**

## **9. COMMUNICATIONS:**

**1. A copy of a letter from the RI Interscholastic League to Coventry High School, regarding the participation in a Girl's Ice Hockey Coop between Smithfield, North Smithfield and now Coventry.**

## **10. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:**

**1. Mr. O'Brien informed the School Committee of a secure portal for school committee members that has been set up that allows the Committee to log into to pick up the meeting packets. He said the Committee will have the option to continue to receive hard copies of the agenda. Mr. O'Brien said he would like to eventually get laptops for all school Committee members so we can go paperless.**

**2. Mr. O'Brien also informed the School Committee of a hot water pipe that had burst and flooded the library at Gallagher Middle School. Mr. O'Brien commended Angelo Mencucci for his quick response in addressing the flooding situation. Mr. Mencucci had contacted Clean Care Company, who brought in approximately sixty of their workers to work on the cleanup. The Trust had been contacted as well. Mr. O'Brien said the air quality had been tested to be sure it was safe to bring students back. The damage included the loss of books and bookcases. Mr. O'Brien commended Mr. Mencucci for putting in extra long days of work.**

## **11. PUBLIC FORUM**

**None.**

## **12. COMMITTEE COMMENTS**

- Mrs. Heenan congratulated the U10 girls' soccer team who won their Division A Championship with coaches Jay Capalbo and Assistant Coach Mike Cost at the Worldwide of Indoor Sports. Mrs. Heenan also congratulated the girls' fifth grade travel basketball team who won first place in Portsmouth.
- Mrs. Harnois congratulated the Middle School dance team who appeared in the Orange Bowl in Florida. The team appeared on television.
- Mr. Iannitelli said the high school music department choir has increased to 40 students, which shows an improvement in enrollment. He said the increase in enrollments brings gratification of the school department's ability to add a part time teacher to the music department. Mr. Iannitelli also stated that tomorrow night at the town council meeting the \$450,000 school department budget item that was left in escrow will be discussed.

## **13. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

At 8:24 p.m. Mr. Oates moved to go into Executive Session to discuss matters pertaining to legal advice concerning a residency issue in accordance with the Open Meeting Act, RI General Laws 42-46-5(a)(2).

Mrs. Harnois seconded the motion. This requires an individual vote. The individual vote was 5-0 polled by Mr. Iannitelli, Chair.

Returned to open session at 9:03 p.m. Mr. Oates moved to seal the minutes of the Executive Session. Mrs. Harnois seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote.

Mr. Oates moved to accept the Executive Session minutes of

**November 19, 2013. Mrs. Harnois seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote.**

**Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Oates; seconded by Mrs. Harnois. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Lisa A. Petrone**

**Secretary**